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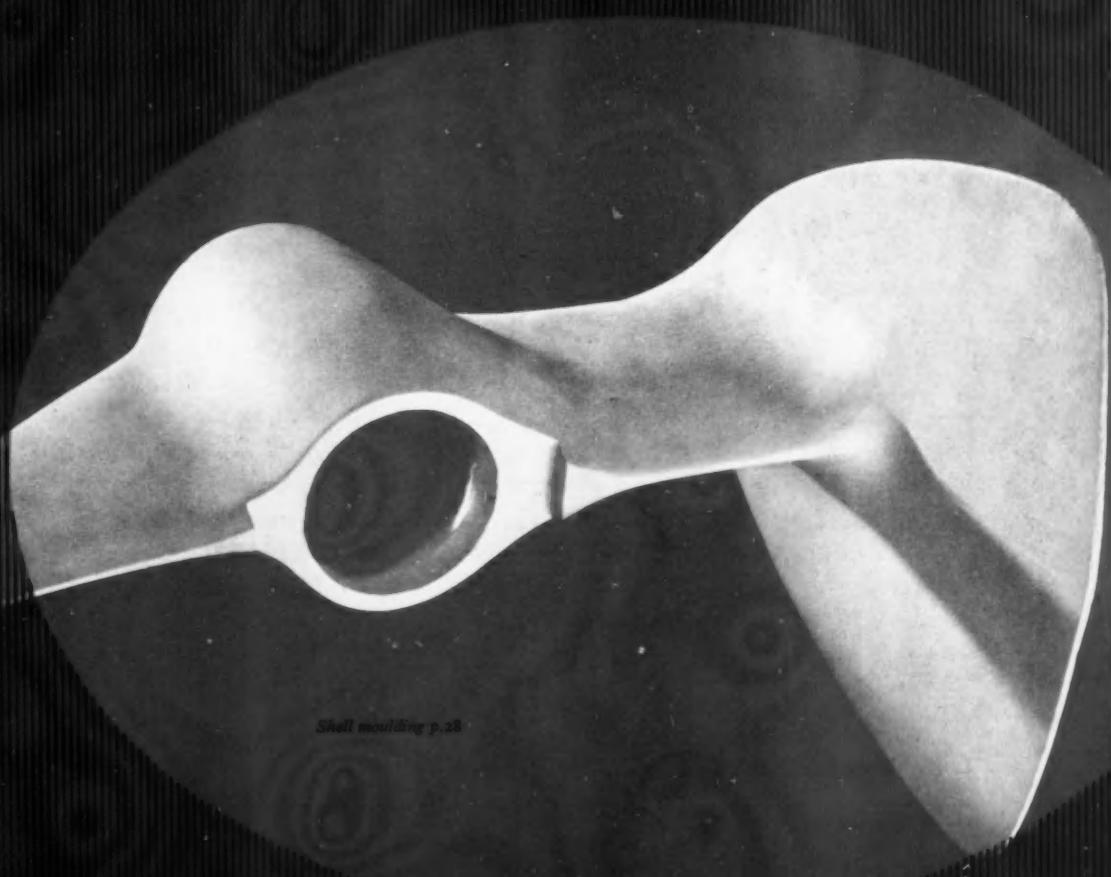
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# Design

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NUMBER 63

MARCH 1954

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# Design

## *Influential people*

IN THE PAST few years DESIGN has pointed to many industries and many groups of people as being exceptionally placed to influence standards of design. There is no shortage of claimants for these key positions. For instance, what could our hotels not do if they went about it the right way, if they were to commission qualified interior designers to prepare their schemes, rather than leave the decisions to their manageresses or to local builder-decorators? How many are the opportunities that have been lost by our hospitals each time new colouring, curtains or furniture are ordered or each time a new nurses' wing or ward is added? How often are these furnishing decisions also left to amateurs, to overworked matrons or to over-cautious committees?

Our British Railways are also fair game. The MANCHESTER GUARDIAN recently added to its record of public service by exposing the deplorable dilapidation of our stations and their waiting-rooms and some action has swiftly followed the exposure. In January we reported a small instance of intelligent design patronage by a Cambridge college. But what are the other colleges doing, or the other universities? And our ministries? There are certainly encouraging sounds and signs from the Ministry of Works but they are long overdue. Will the service ministries now take their cue, or NAAFI? They also are in the market for design in every canteen, mess or barracks, yet so far their policy seems only to confirm the old joke that there are two ways of doing anything — the right way and the army way.

If all these agencies, and many others like them, could be persuaded of the importance of well-designed surroundings and of well-chosen furnishings and equipment, the battle for good design from British factories would be as good as won, for they are all customers of industry on a very large scale.

The problem is to find the person responsible or, in his absence, to put someone competent into a position of authority. Most big organisations have a buying office or a purchasing officer, but only rarely are they men of taste and vision; their training and expertise lie in other directions.

It is with these thoughts in mind that from this month forward DESIGN will publish reviews of well-designed office furnishings and equipment, for the office is a good starting-point from which to influence these wider areas of choice. We shall discuss the crucial question of cost in this column next month.

# POINTS and POINTERS

**VISIONARY PHOENIX** As "a trustee and a trumpet of the nation's glory" the City of London has been reminded by Sir David Eccles that in its rebuilding the layout, appearance and equipment of the new offices called for a deliberate decision to adopt standards of fine architecture and craftsmanship. The Minister of Works drove his point home, for he was speaking to authorities and developers of the City at the Mansion House. "How shameful it would be if, a generation hence, instead of praise for the new buildings, there was a general lament that so great an opportunity had been thrown away. I wish to be blunt about the disaster which threatens. I fear that unless swift and effective action is taken we shall see fat and familiar, mediocre and characterless neo-Georgian architecture rising from Hitler's ruins to betray the confident spirit of the new reign."

Sir David's point about the equipment of the new buildings is as important as the landscape of the City itself. Office interior design should be both serviceable and impressive, especially in the City as the headquarters of an aggregate of firms which earn more foreign exchange than any single industry. At present the foreign visitor to the majority of City offices could return home totally unaware that British commerce has anything to do with modern design. The hallowed clichés, so tellingly exposed by the Minister, are not only irrelevant to the plans for new buildings, but in countless existing offices they deny the rising prestige of British design. It would not be necessary to demolish these offices before the many talented designers, now at work elsewhere, could with new furniture, equipment and decoration produce authentic environments for modern commerce.

**ATOMIC COLOURS** As the latest wonder of the New World the 'Nautilus', a submarine capable of being driven by nuclear energy non-stop for more than 30,000 miles, brings the surprising assurance that industrial design is already well to the fore in the Atomic Age. It may be some time before we can discuss the appearance design of an atomic engine: all we know about the first one is its immense size and the fact that it occupies more than half the length of the 'Nautilus'. But it is in the relationship between the machine itself and the sailors on board that a team of industrial designers has already entered. The mental effect upon the crew of a submarine capable of staying submerged for seven weeks at a time was thought to be so serious that the United States Navy called in a design team to evolve soothing colours for decks and bulkheads. Other creature comforts have also been attended to, including the provision of a juke box, but it is not known whether the designers had a hand in bettering the appearance of this visually irritating appliance.

**FANCY GOODS DESIGN** Without a coronation to stimulate business the fancy goods trade turns again to the more conventional outlets for souvenirs. Among the 500 exhibitors at the recent Harrogate 'Gifts and Fancy Goods Fair' a small but promising group of manufacturers, many of them introducing their pottery, glass and leather articles for the first time, was showing a keen interest in better design. Strong competition is coming in from Europe, particularly from Sweden and Czechoslovakia where, inherently, their designers seem to have that sense of fitness towards trinkets, mementos and jewellery which many British firms are only just beginning to acquire. A good lead for a new movement was given by Elkan Simons, national chairman of the Fancy Goods Association, who said that sets in plays on television and the films showing well-designed in-

terior had educated public taste. It was now difficult, he said, to sell badly designed fancy goods for the home. We hope that retailers will not manage to prove Mr Simons wrong.

**IN THE STREET** Public annoyance and traffic confusion have made the ingrained habit of parking a car in London a major problem for the authorities. Underground car parks are one of the solutions and to help pay for them it is recommended that parking meters should be installed. By placing one shilling in the slot a car may be parked for two hours alongside the meter shown here, which operates on a post at the height of 4 ft 6 inches above the pavement.

This standard American design, with its thick, insensitive 'jelly-mould' contours and heavy-handed lettering, is to be made in this country by Venner Ltd. Alone it will not look pleasant, but seen in a row along a pavement or spaced at intervals around a London square its contribution to street furniture can only be deplored.

(A letter from the president of The Society of Industrial Artists appears on page 35.)





Maurice Gilbert, Managing Director, the Jaeger Co Ltd, is a firm believer in the selling power of good modern design, whether in merchandise, shops, showrooms, offices or conference rooms. His own office is partly a place for desk work, partly for informal conferences; folding doors separate the areas. It is a place for putting over and exchanging ideas, not for selling merchandise — there are no samples lying around. General atmosphere is persuasive and domestic rather than bureaucratic or commercial. The only concession to company publicity is an outline map of the world on the ceiling indicating Jaeger ramifications. The conference area (not shown in our photograph) is equipped with easy, not board-room chairs. Originally designed by Charles Kenrick, the rooms have recently been altered by Dennis Lennon. Neat, small desk, with extra leaf for figure sheets, and chairs were designed by Kenrick; table lamp was supplied by Finmar Ltd; general contractors, Cooke's (Finsbury) Ltd.

## They chose A MODERN DESK

IN THE COMING MONTHS DESIGN will regularly carry illustrated reviews of new office equipment and of new offices. To open the series we asked permission to photograph a number of busy men at their new desks. There is nothing in common between the industries represented — aluminium, banking, chemicals, clothing, cosmetics, printing and publishing; there is little in common between the styles of the furniture, though each piece has been designed within the last few years; there is no uniform policy behind the furnishings — some offices have been completely re-designed, others show new furniture in existing

conventional settings. But in each case the client chose up-to-date, modern furniture as a matter of company prestige; in most cases personal preference would have led to the same choice.

There must be thousands of businessmen in this country with more or less money to spend who would gladly follow suit if only they knew where to look for this modern furniture or where to go for the best advice on modern interior design. Through 'Design Review', its illustrated record of good stock designs, and through its Record of Designers, the CoID can help in both these searches, without obligation or cost.



**LEFT:** Gerald Lacey, Director in charge of sales, The British Aluminium Co Ltd, has a third-floor office in neo-Georgian Norfolk House (one-time SHAFF HQ) overlooking St James's Square. When the company moved back from the City two years ago he decided to have a decorative scheme of his own choosing. During conversation, sceptical colleagues called his office the 'Picasso Room'. They were wide of the mark, for the room is as trim and well-kempt as its occupier. There was no radical reconstruction; the imitation Georgian pine panelling was left in place though stripped, bleached and waxed. The modern character stems from the colour scheme - pale turquoise-blue carpet, muted red curtains (matched by the blotting pad), grey leather upholstery, and straight-grained walnut furniture. The furniture made to strict dimensions - even the size of the paper clip tray was prescribed - is in a sound English tradition without imitating any past period. Designed by W. H. Russell, it was made by Gordon Russell Ltd for Russell Furnishings Ltd. The carpet and curtains were supplied by Harrods Ltd. The same colour scheme and soft furnishings are repeated in the adjoining secretary's office where the steel furniture and cabinet have been painted to match the grey leather upholstery. Mr Lacey is an active Member of the Council of Industrial Design.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Sam Lambert

**RIGHT:** Rodney Gardner, Vice-Chairman and Joint Managing Director of Yardley Ltd, is no stranger to contemporary furniture. He has it at home. His office is in the company's East London factory. Visitors are mainly Yardley staff and employees. The office was not therefore furnished primarily as a sales aid, but to bring it into line with the clean, efficient factory. Contractors were Heal's Contracts Ltd, working closely to Mr Gardner's ideas. The first piece of furniture chosen was the now famous laminated chair designed by Basil Spence, made by Morris of Glasgow ("women and furniture should both have curves"). Next Heal's was called in to design a pear and rosewood table and the pearwood desk. The curtains are Heal's modern tapestry 'Bird and Vase' in blue.

**RIGHT:** Our banks have for so long appeared mesmerised by the conflicting claims of Georgian gentility and massive Victorian mahogany that any departure from the classic conventions should earn a little cheer. Of all the big banks it is perhaps Martins that has been most daring in its design policy, albeit always well this side of offending the three S's - safety, sobriety and substance. One or two recent branches have recognisably belonged to this century and the same might be said of the reconstructed City premises in Gracechurch Street where Raymond Davidson, the Foreign Manager of Martins Bank, sits in a smooth and tidy office designed by the architects Westwood Sons and Harrison (assistant in charge, James Crabtree). Tradition is observed, of course, in the mahogany desk by E. C. Hughes Ltd, and mahogany dado but both have a crisper look than formerly and the scarlet leather on desk and chairs affords a fine splash of colour.



**ABOVE:** Michael Cyanamid Proctor, in his office at the Cyanamid House, overlooking the River Thames. The room has a mix of traditional and modern elements, including a globe on the desk and a framed picture on the wall.



**RIGHT:** Robert Americans, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of Martins Bank, sits in a smooth and tidy office designed by the architects Westwood Sons and Harrison (assistant in charge, James Crabtree). The room has a mix of traditional and modern elements, including a globe on the desk and a framed picture on the wall.



ABOVE: Michael S. Henderson, Director in charge of Finance, Cyanamid Products Ltd., works in an eighth-floor office in Bush House, overlooking the Strand. Like thousands of other rooms in modern blocks, it was architecturally featureless. Life and character must be imported by decoration and furnishing. A chance meeting on a train led to Ian Henderson (no relation) being commissioned to design the furniture and choose the soft furnishings. The client's early qualms were soon dispelled; he wouldn't have "the old stuff" back even if all his visitors do not take to the new. The new, however, is by no means revolutionary - a sober walnut pedestal desk with smoothly rounded corners and slightly tapering drawer units, nicely detailed solid walnut edge round the desk top separated from the veneer by a narrow sycamore inlay, carpets and curtains mostly patterned but subdued in tone and a standard landlord's cream paint on the walls - in short a careful 'half-way house' befits its owner's position. (The contractors were Story's of Kensington.)



ABOVE: Charles Mansell, Chairman and Managing Director, Balding and Mansell, printers of DESIGN, was faced with a common enough problem when he moved his offices to the distinguished Bloomsbury House that was originally the home of Sir Hans Sloane. The line of caution would have been to play up to the old Williams and Mary house with reproduction or antique furniture. A bolder course was taken. A contemporary scheme was installed to match the firm's up-to-date reputation. In the hands of a sensitive designer like Geoffrey Dunn the old house has not been affronted. The Race table and chairs and the special fitments for display, storage, switchboards, etc., are practical and unassuming; the blend of old and new makes a good talking point in an industry like printing where old crafts meet new techniques. (The contractors were Dunn's of Bromley.)



RIGHT: Robert H. Garey and William E. Channing, both Americans and respectively London advertising managers of Life and Time discuss a problem in the former's office in the much publicised Time & Life Building, New Bond Street. The room was designed by Sir Hugh Casson and Misha Black before Mr Garey took over. Mr Garey might have chosen differently - he is used to purpose-made furniture and misses the filing space he had in his last office in Japan - but he likes the comfortable character of his new room; he thinks it compares well with current American standards. The desk of pitch elm, partly covered with grey hide, was designed by Robin Day, made by S. Hille & Co Ltd, as was the swivel chair.

# Office equipment

## \*PART ONE

### Partitions and Desks

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DESIGN IN THE PLACE OF WORK may be ambiguous as an alternative title for this series, but it does help to explain the astonishingly rapid growth of the office equipment industry. As in many new and expanding industries, design for convenience, efficiency, easy maintenance and good appearance in office equipment tends to lag behind the engineers' initial thrust with technical developments. The market, though receptive to new ideas to increase the accuracy and pace of its work, is in fact composed of men and women who day after day live with the equipment they handle. Proportion, shape, colour and finish can affect them as directly as the equipment affects the efficiency of the office. This first article in a series of five to be published in alternate issues of DESIGN introduces the subject with a survey of current design for partitions, desks and chairs.

BEFORE THE WAR MANY ITEMS of office equipment for sale in this and other countries came from the United States. During the war, with our source of supply cut off, orders began to accumulate which, eventually, could not be met by American firms because we were unable to pay for imports in dollars. The situation encouraged American firms to set up subsidiary factories in this country. To begin with the goods produced by these factories were diverted to the export market to meet orders from countries within the sterling area. Subsequently the needs of the home market were met. The industry has increased its production to nearly twenty times that of pre-war, and its exports fifteen times.

These factors alone do not altogether account for the continued expansion of the industry nor for the spirit of optimism which one notes when talking to manufacturers. Other factors are involved such as the social and economic conditions of commercial life, which have undergone radical changes since the war. Scientific developments have also assisted greatly in the production of new equipment.

The industry is now one of major importance to this country both in the home and overseas markets, including the United States. Office equipment firms are located throughout the country, but centred

mainly in London and the Home Counties, in Birmingham, the Midlands and the industrial areas of Scotland. It is impossible to give any figures relating to the number of persons employed by the industry, because although many firms specialise in the manufacture of some form of office equipment, others are engaged upon a number of different activities of which business equipment may only form a part.

### A developing market

The period of full employment which we experienced at the end of the war created a shortage of skilled labour in offices as well as in many other fields; conditions in factories have improved and wages risen so much in recent years that the old class distinction between the office worker and the factory worker has almost disappeared. In many cities the legacy of bombing created a dearth of office accommodation which brought about an inevitable rise in the cost of office space. Before the war office rents in London were about 8s to 10s per sq ft, but now they have increased to 20s and 25s per sq ft. Secretarial costs have also risen. A shorthand typist in 1935 earned a weekly wage of approximately £3 10s but

## R Dudley Ryder

PART TWO May Filing systems  
PART THREE July Typewriters  
PART FOUR September Calculators  
PART FIVE November Duplicators

now typists earn an average of £6 per week. The same ratio of increases in costs is to be found in other factors, overhead expenses, taxes, pensions, etc.

Owing to the size and complexity of modern industry, competing within itself and in markets abroad, it is essential for a manufacturer to know from day to day what is going on in his works and to know the cost of all stages of production, so that he may plot his course for the future. In these days production is planned and controlled down to the last detail from the central office, which can be regarded as the information centre of a business. In fact, nearly all office machinery is designed either to obtain figures or data or to give out information which will assist the business man to run his business efficiently and profitably.

Manufacturers are continually being urged to increase production, and to do this it is necessary to keep down costs, not only in the factory, but also in the office. The office must be made an efficient productive unit; more work, and more accurate work, must be done by fewer people. It is as well to remember that a simple invoice of four lines may cost up to 3s to produce including calculation, perforation, clerk's salary, capital investment on equipment, rent, rates, overheads, checking and material. The cost of paper work involved in producing a well-known motor-car engine alone costs £3. All that has been said applies with equal force to large and small businesses, and even to the professional man such as a solicitor or doctor.

The office appliance and business equipment industry has not been slow in watching the trends of modern business. Almost without exception manufacturers have set themselves the task of producing a wide range of appliances and equipment designed to assist those who are anxious to solve more efficiently their problems of office administration.

## Design planning

A year or two ago one of the leading manufacturers decided to review the design of his range of metal furniture. A research and development committee and a technical committee were set up under the chairmanship, in both cases, of the chief engineer who is normally responsible for design. The former committee was composed of the higher company executives up to managing director level, sales representatives, the production engineer, the chief chemist, the advertising consultant, and a well-known architect. The latter committee concerned itself with technical problems related to tooling and production.

Another leading firm has set up a design and development section. Its members consist of the heads of the different departments of the firm who meet to discuss any new project. When it is thought necessary, experts in time and motion study and other types of business efficiency may be consulted. Other firms are known to have similar arrangements for dealing with questions of design.

It has not yet been found possible to lay down any rigid standards embracing methods of construction, finish, etc, for the office equipment industry, but in 1949 the British Standards Institution published under the title OFFICE EQUIPMENT (METAL) B.S. NO. 1558 a set of dimensional standards covering desks and tables, filing cabinets, plan cabinets, and sizes of strong-room doors. This British Standard does not attempt to include all the necessary provisions of a contract, in fact the wisest method when calling for tenders for a large contract is to stipulate that sample equipment should be submitted for inspection. The main purpose of these standards is to specify minimum standard dimensions which will ensure that different pieces of equipment will be related in size and facilitate the planning of office and factory layouts. The standards should bring about economies in production without hampering freedom of design.

Modern architecture and methods of building construction make it possible to provide large areas of unrestricted floor space with stanchions between floors placed at wide intervals. It is not easy in these days for a business man to assess what his requirements will be in a few years' time either as far as factory space or office space is concerned, and therefore it is necessary to consider the most economical and flexible method of dividing up a large floor area so that as conditions alter the accommodation may be adapted to meet current needs. Many firms are producing steel partitioning and doors with glazed

panels for office use or with stout metal mesh panels for the factory which are admirably suited to the construction of offices. Such partitions give nearly 100 per cent salvage value when taken down and re-erected in some other form. They can be reassembled easily and at little cost, and can be taken from one building to another should it be found necessary to move a firm's headquarters.

As Chinese philosophers have pointed out, it is not the four walls of a room that matter but the space enclosed by the four walls. This is particularly true today when thinking of the rent of office space in terms of cost per sq ft. Desks and furniture now being made on the unit principle allow for great flexibility in the planning of an office. Either single desks of different types or continuous desking for large offices may be assembled from a number of basic units. Even the desk units themselves have been designed to incorporate ancillary equipment such as drawers to house files as in a filing cabinet, card indices, pen trays, and typewriters with extending shelves on which they may be used. These features obviate the need for much of the older desk equipment and save time and trouble.

There is still a prejudice in some quarters against the use of steel for office furniture, particularly for executives' offices. There will no doubt always be a demand for furniture made of timber for board-rooms and for the offices of chairmen and managing directors of companies. Wooden furniture, of which there are many good examples, is frequently designed by architects and others to meet individual requirements. However, the number of firms producing metal furniture has increased since the war due very largely to the fact that some manufacturers in the sheet metal industry found, after completing government contracts at the end of the war, that their factories could no longer work at full capacity. As they had suitable machines they began to manufacture metal furniture.

A few firms have specialised in the production of such furniture ever since the idea of using steel for office furniture was first introduced into this country. These firms may still be said to be in the lead as far as design is concerned, and they have been quick to embark on new designs, or make modifications to existing designs whenever improvements have been found necessary.

It is unfortunate that firms which possess live design policies do not also undertake the design and manufacture of office chairs. A great deal of attention has been paid in the last few years to the functional aspect of the design, known as occupational seating, but until recently little thought appears to have been

given to the appearance of office chairs. In spite of attempts by some firms to tidy up the appearance of metal chairs used by executives and typists, the majority of these chairs still give the impression of having been knocked up by a cycle mechanic. For an executive a contemporary version of the traditional wooden swivel chair with upholstered seating meets all functional requirements in addition to being still one of the most comfortable and pleasant chairs of its kind on the market.

It is clear from this summary of the office equipment industry that increased attention to appearance design should more often be coupled with technical developments. The relatively recent introduction of 'open plan' offices to which desks, cabinets and machinery co-ordinated by the unit principle are best suited, presents design problems to be faced by all manufacturers. So too must the growing complexity of manually operated equipment be appreciated from the start by the designer working with a team of technicians. As several of the illustrations on these pages and in the subsequent articles will show, this approach to design has not been fully appreciated.

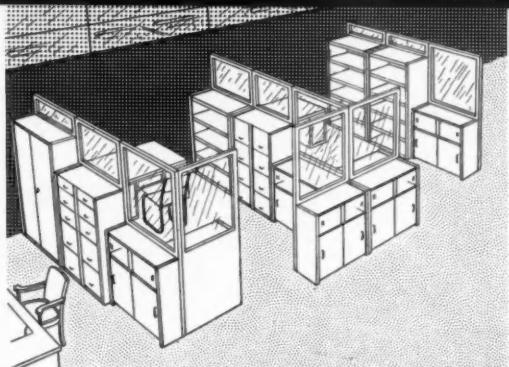


ABOVE: The latest developments in the architecture of office buildings and modern methods of building construction provide large areas of unrestricted floor space which may be subdivided into offices to suit the special requirements of different tenants. Partitions of various kinds,

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Sankey S



ABOVE: Many manufacturers produce steel partitioning employing different methods of construction and of fixing. An example, by Roneo Ltd, illustrates the interior of an office with steel furniture and doors.



ABOVE RIGHT: An interesting new development in partitioning has recently been introduced which enables a floor area to be divided into bays which may be quickly and easily rearranged without the assistance of the manufacturers. The system consists of steel frames with glass panels of

different sizes which are attached to various units of office furniture, bringing them all to uniform height. These units economise in space to the maximum extent and are manufactured by Randall Products Ltd.

## Partitions



RIGHT: Steel partitioning designed on the unit principle has many advantages. Its use combines economy of space and of cost, ease of rearrangement, and gives protection from fire. The illustration shows steel partitioning produced by Sankey Sheldon Ltd.

## SECRETARIAL desks and chairs

### METAL desks

1: The diagrams of pedestals shown on the left indicate the variety which may be used in building up a desk unit to suit individual requirements. The units form part of the range of Roneo flexible desking. Each unit in the range, like that shown on the right, is made up of a number of standard components which can form desks for executives and typists or side tables and continuous desking.

2: In large general offices continuous desking may help very considerably in economising in space while also providing other advantages. The illustration shows how this form of desking may be assembled using standard components in the range of flexible desking by Roneo Ltd.

3: A further development in the idea of building up desks of different kinds with the use of standard components is to be found in this desk. Here the desk pedestals themselves and even separate drawer or filing cabinets may be built up of four standard drawer units which are secured by special interlocking assembly frames. The system has been introduced by Amselock Filing and Records Equipment Ltd.

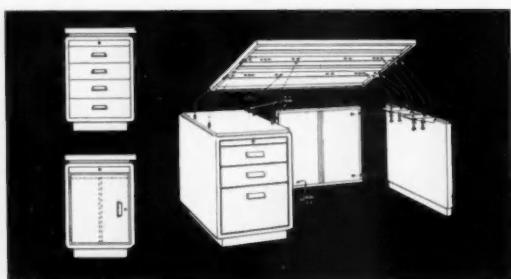
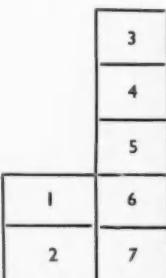
4: The 'Airline' secretarial desk is a companion model to the 'Airline' executive desk. The typewriter housing can be installed in either a left-hand or right-

hand pedestal. The desk is fitted with adjustable feet and covered with ARTOLIN finished in grey, black, maroon or olive-green enamel. It is designed and made by Art Metal Construction Co.

5: This secretarial typist's desk provides an unbroken top surface as well as a convenient position and support for the typewriter. The typewriter itself is housed in the left-hand pedestal and is easily raised to the operating position by a well balanced mechanism. The top of the desk is covered with linoleum, with a chromium-plated binding. The desk is available in dark green or grey enamel finish and is designed and made by Milners Safe Co Ltd.

6: This illustration shows another type of steel desk designed to meet the needs of those who require a desk with a full-width top and only one pedestal. The overlap of the top allows comfortable room for a stenographer to work at the end of this desk, which belongs to the range of 'Universal' interchangeable desk units produced by Constructors Ltd.

7: The 'Masterform' single pedestal clerk's desk is adjustable in height and may therefore be used as a typist's desk. The pedestal can be fitted on either side. The desk is finished in grey or olive-green enamel with satin chrome fittings. The top may be covered in black, terra cotta, light and dark green or grey linoleum. It is designed and made by Sankey Sheldon Ltd.



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The Educu

6: This si  
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drawer un  
table fram  
or both si

## WOOD desks and chairs

1: Light desk or writing-table made of birch or ramin-wood. The pedestal can be moved from left to right, or removed altogether to form a small table. Designed by Christopher Heal for Heal & Son Ltd.

2: Stacking table desk with optional drawer unit. It can be made in cherry, walnut or mahogany and also supplied with a WAKERITE top. Designed by Robin Day for S. Hille & Co Ltd.

3: The desk is part of a range of unit furniture. Two plain drawers and one filing drawer are included in this simple pedestal desk made of mahogany and agba. Designed by Robert and Roger Nicholson and made by George M. Hammer & Co Ltd.

4: Secretary's desk on a de luxe scale made of cedar wood. It has a revolving central drawer containing a typewriter, extensively fitted drawers and three pull-out tray flaps. The top surface projects well beyond the main body of the desk allowing a free working area and plenty of leg room. Designed by Tom Lupton and made by Nichols & Janes Ltd for Elizabeth Eaton Ltd.

5: Simple wooden desk making the best use of storage space available. The 'weatherboard' drawer fronts incorporate finger-pull handles. Designed by J. W. Leonard for The Educational Supply Association Ltd.

6: This simple and well-designed desk has a teak frame with teak-veneered top and drawer units. It is composed of a standard table frame to which may be fitted, on one or both sides, five different drawer units.

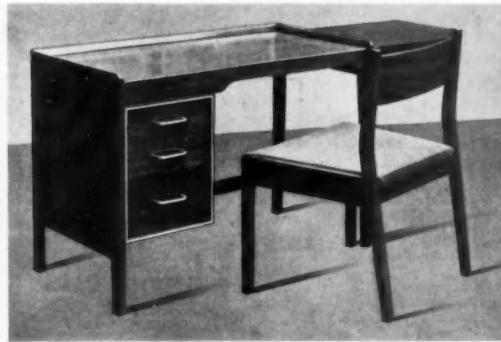
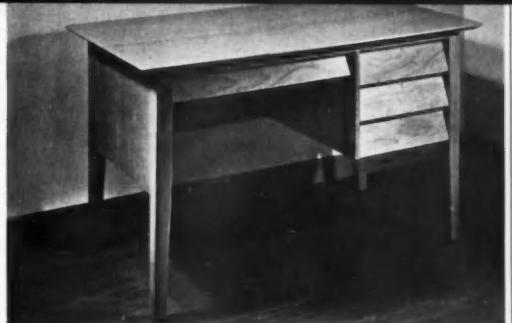
5		
6		
7		
1	3	8
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Designed by Tom Lupton and John Morton for LM Furniture Ltd.

7: Space freedom and lightness in appearance are features of this occasional desk suitable for secretarial use. It is based on a four-drawer unit, with recessed finger grips, which can be supplied on castors to make a separate piece. The desk forms part of a range of office furniture designed by Robin Day for S. Hille & Co Ltd.

8: The seat height of this typist's chair is adjustable from 17 to 21 inches. The backrest position may also be adjusted while seated, both vertically and horizontally. The chair shown here is upholstered in Bedford cord, but is also available in leathercloth of different colours. It is produced by Leabank Office Equipment Ltd.

9: Another typist's chair, produced by Evertaut Ltd, provides for the adjustment of the seat height from 19 to 24 inches. In this model the appearance of the adjustable seat screw has been enclosed and the leg assembly greatly improved over that of previous models.



## EXECUTIVES' desks and chairs

### WOOD desks

**1:** The desk shown is veneered in American walnut grown at Fontainebleau, France. The top is partly covered in grey leather. Designed by Robin Day for S. Hille & Co Ltd. The swivel armchair is another piece of good contemporary design.

**2:** Substantial all-purpose oak desk fitted with three-drawer pedestal, a cupboard pedestal and a full-length bookcase with sliding doors on the other side. Alternative storage arrangements in the pedestals are obtainable. Designed by A. Loebenstein for D. Meredew Ltd.

**3:** The drawer unit on the right of the desk contains one shallow and one deep drawer, with a false handle to match the three drawers on the left. Note the generous overhanging flaps. Designed by Leslie T. Corke for Finewood Products Ltd.

**4:** The light alloy framework of this double pedestal desk supports the drawers and top of mahogany. The slim, precise detailing of this desk makes it adaptable to many situations. Designed by J. W. Leonard for the Educational Supply Association Ltd.

**5:** Robust double pedestal desk economically designed but providing much storage space. It is made of oak with a linoleum writing surface. Made by E. N. Mason & Sons Ltd.

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

**6:** Desk convertible to a table with laminated wood legs forming a decorative motif which is repeated in the drawer handles. The drawer unit can be accommodated on either side. Designed by Christopher Heal for Heal & Son Ltd.

**7:** Double pedestal desk of crisp, business-like appearance. It is made of mahogany or oak with anodised aluminium handles to the drawers. The left-hand pedestal contains a small cupboard. Designed by W. H. Russell for Gordon Russell Ltd.

**8:** Desk, armchair and mobile cabinet made of mahogany and agba. The double pedestal desk has three drawers on the left and two, including a filing drawer, on the right. Designed by Robert and Roger Nicholson for George M. Hammer & Co Ltd.

**9:** The writing desk is of more conventional design and is veneered in Australian black-bean inlaid with sycamore. It provides for ample leg-room and the chair, which is upholstered in leather on a walnut frame, forms an admirable companion to the desk, but may be obtained separately. Designed and made by Ian Henderson Ltd.



### METAL desks and chairs

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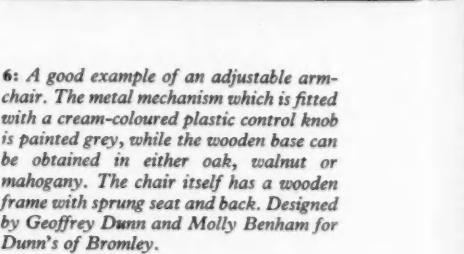
**1:** The 'Milcraft' steel desk with rounded corners and edges is finished in green or grey enamel with matching plastic top. This desk which is fitted with adjustable screw feet at the front and back of each pedestal is available in different sizes. All box and filing drawers are easily interchangeable, and pedestals are also interchangeable between single and double pedestal desks. Designed and made by Milners Safe Co Ltd.

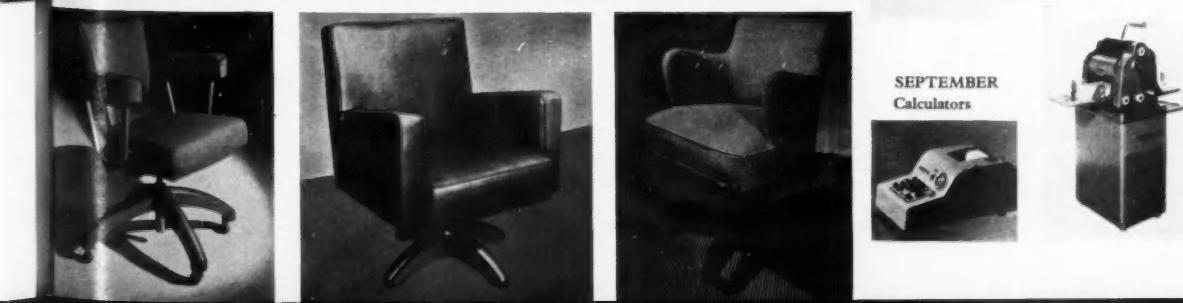
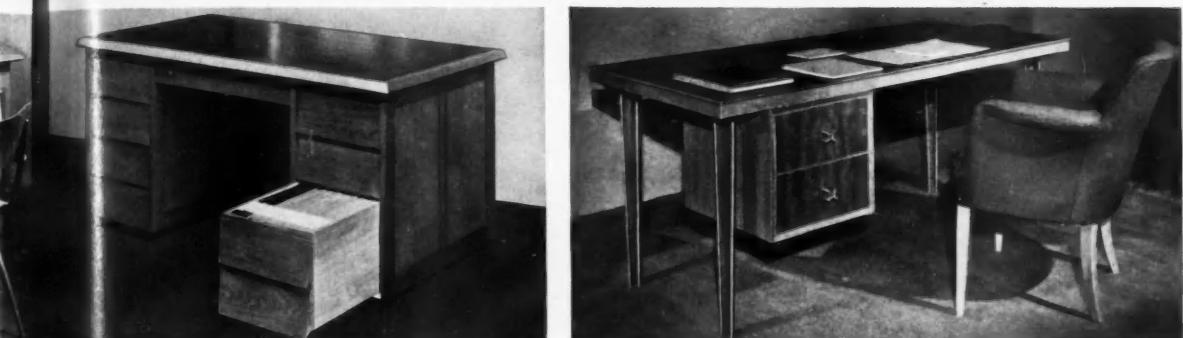
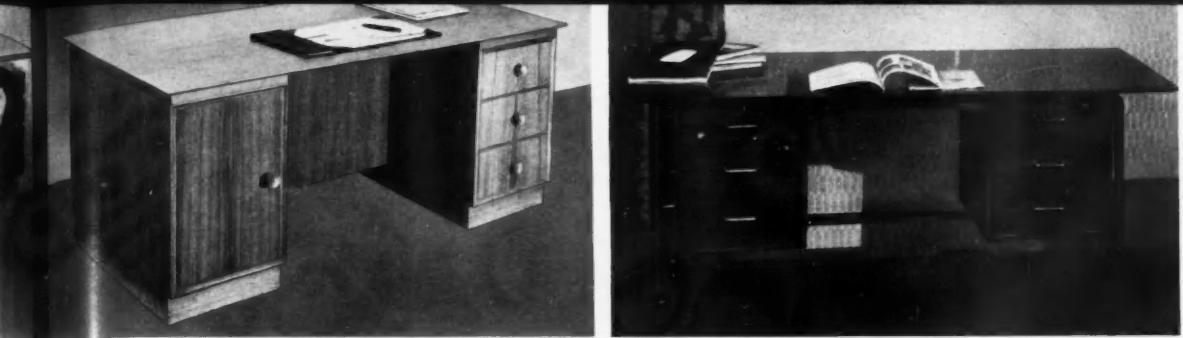
**2:** This desk has been planned, not as an individual piece of equipment with its own separate characteristics, but as part of a scheme for the harmonious furnishing of a complete office. The desk, which is surfaced with black 'battlehip' linoleum and edged with polished plastic binding, forms part of the range of flexible desking and equipment made by Roneo Ltd, with Frederick Gibberd as consultant designer.

**3:** The 'Airline' executive desk is another example of a well-designed steel desk with adjustable island bases which provide more room for the feet. It is finished in grey, black, maroon or olive green, and is covered with washable ARTOLIN. Designed and made by Art Metal Construction Co.

**4:** This armchair has a base, consisting of a light alloy casting of very clean lines, which is provided with a grease guard over the lower portion of the adjustable seat screw. Chair designed and made by Leabank Office Equipment Ltd.

**5:** Designed for the use of directors or senior executives. This chair with its cast metal base incorporates a fore and aft tilting action which can be adjusted for tension by means of a hand-wheel. The chair is designed and produced by Evertaut Ltd.





**\* OFFICE EQUIPMENT  
to be published in DESIGN**

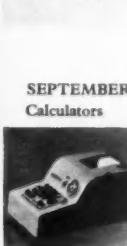
MAY  
Filing Systems



JULY  
Typewriters



NOVEMBER  
Duplicators



SEPTEMBER  
Calculators





## Living and Dining with COLOUR

A. Gardner-Medwin

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN the policy of Kandy Ltd to produce well made clean-looking furniture. Lately the firm's interest in design has become even more evident from the new range it is now making. The neat kitchen fitments which formed part of the firm's pre-war range will be remembered. It is therefore not surprising to learn that Kandy has now produced three sets

of furniture with the modern breakfast room in mind.

The separate dining-room is slowly disappearing and the combined living/dining-room, or dining annex is taking its place. It would not seem that this is a passing fashion, but rather that it has been borne out of necessity — the necessity being perhaps lack of space or servants, or the wish to economise by heating one

room instead of two. Outside influences have been the building regulations and the high cost of materials, both of which have made the architect plan the modern home very carefully and compactly. Many of the houses and flats in the new towns and in council projects are planned with one large living-room rather than two small rooms for sitting and eating separately. This is not peculiar to this country as it has been the practice on the Continent for some time. More open planning and combined purpose rooms were very much in evidence in the homes I visited recently in Canada, the U.S.A. and Scandinavia.

Although the new Kandy furniture has been designed specifically for this purpose it would not be difficult to imagine it in the large kitchen planned with an eating area. Here, as well as in the living/dining-room, the requirements of storage and appearance dictate the development of new types of cabinet

which are as different from the conventional dining-room sideboard as they are from the purely utilitarian kitchen cupboard. More space is needed for storing not only crockery and silver, but food and kitchen utensils as well. In these conditions storage cabinets need to be larger and taller than the sideboard while the standard of finish and attention to detail must at least be equal. It may be going too far to suggest that the days of the sideboard as we know it are over, but it is true to say that these Kandy pieces represent a new approach to the design of furniture which is directly in key with the requirements of modern living.

Of particular interest is the use of laminated plastics in combination with wood in natural finishes. This provides contrasts of colour and texture which are still comparatively rare in modern furniture and which stem both from the contemporary urge for more and brighter colour in the home and from the need for

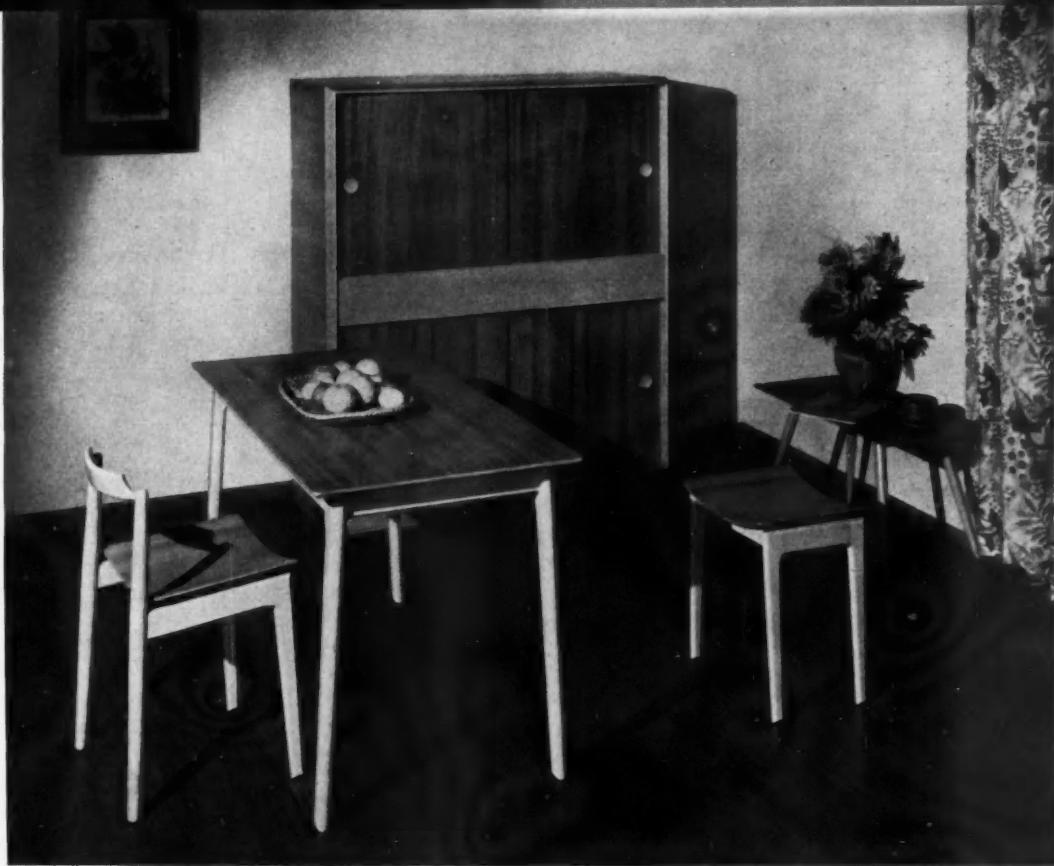
*LEFT: Colour plays an important part in these sets. The WARERITE doors to the sideboard are specially 'balanced' to avoid warping or bending and are available in various colours. The glass sliding doors are in Chance Brothers' 'Spotlite' design. The beech underframe of the table is nicely detailed and the top with two drop flaps is covered in grey and white check WARERITE, or in plain colours. The 'Jason' chairs are well known by now, but it is interesting to*

*see the outside shell painted to match the coloured plastic. Designers: (sideboard) Margaret Harvey; (table) Frank Guille; (chairs) Carl Jacobs.*

*BELLOW: Shown here is a shorter cupboard with a shelf above. The tops of both are again WARERITE and aluminium extrusions are used on the edges. The profile of this piece is particularly interesting and the designer has gone to great trouble in the*

*refining of the leading edges and handles to avoid any appearance of clumsiness in this fairly large piece of furniture. The chairs are covered in VYNIDE to match or contrast with the WARERITE and are made by W. Hands & Sons Ltd, for Kandy. Here again, as an alternative, the 'Jason' chairs would fit in quite happily, particularly when the seats are painted in bright colours. Designer: (cupboard) P. K. Bridson.*



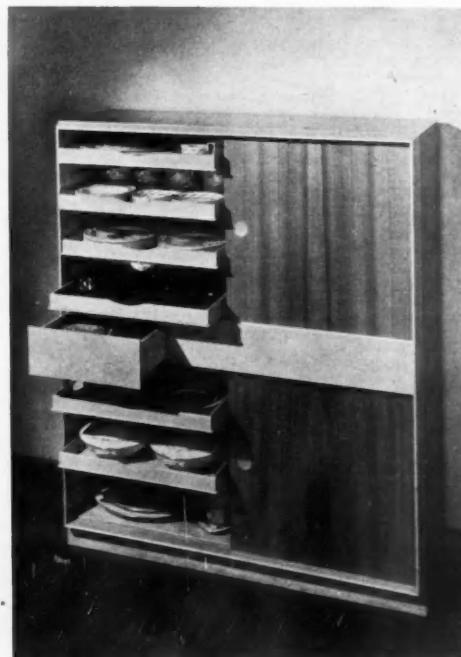


*ABOVE:* An unusual dining set designed for the living/dining-room. The table has an elm top with beech underframe. The stool is an alternative to the chair, both having saddle-shaped elm seats. Although these pieces are offered as a set it is not difficult to see the possibilities of the buffet by itself as a storage cupboard in the living-room, bedroom, or even on a landing. Designer: Frank Guille. The china and cutlery illustrated were kindly lent by Heal & Son Ltd.

*RIGHT:* The buffet in beech and elm, which is 5 ft long and 5 ft 7 inches high, offers considerable storage space and fills a long-felt want. The shelves, drawers and removable trays can accommodate all the china, glass, cutlery, linen, drinks, etc., required for everyday use. The designer's idea was that each tray could hold the tableware for a particular occasion and be brought to the dining- or living-room as required.

surfaces which can be washed down and still remain bright and fresh. Endless possibilities are suggested by the use of these materials and by the exciting new treatments of the 'Jason' chairs with their juxtaposition of natural wood and painted surfaces. One can see how much thought has gone into making this range and how careful is the detailing. The result has been a refinement in design expected only in the more costly dining- and living-room pieces.

There is little doubt that the furniture shown on these pages should prove very popular. Its colourfulness will also be greatly appreciated by retailers who wish to make attractive window displays.





# TWO HUNDRED YEARS WITH INDUSTRIAL ART

Basil Taylor



*The Royal Society of Arts celebrates its bicentenary this month. During a long period when taste and opinion have manœuvred from one position into another the Society has many times reasserted its challenge to manufacturers that more designers with better training should be employed by industry. Today with its lectures, bursaries and exhibitions the Society shows that its traditional interest in design is very much alive.*

ABOVE LEFT: The Society's original medal designed in 1757 by James Stuart ('Athenian Stuart'), engraved by Thomas Pingo, engraver to the Mint, and made in gold or silver.

ABOVE: The reverse side of the Society's medal at the present time designed by Percy Metcalfe from an original emblem by F. H. Andrews. The design was first used in 1947 when HM the Queen (then Princess Elizabeth) became president of the Society.

THE ARTIST IS NOW more certain to receive Encouragement than employment and it is one of the distinctions of the Royal Society of Arts that it inaugurated, at any rate in England, this era of Encouragement. It is, indeed, the oldest surviving relative not only of the Council of Industrial Design but of the Arts Council. As that body was originally called the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts, so was the RSA originally called the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Its founder, William Shipley, is said to have laid down that, "Encouragement is much the same to Arts and Sciences as culture is to Vegetables; they always

advance and flourish in proportion to the rewards they acquire and the honours they claim". The establishment of a Society with this aim recognised the progress of technology upon which the Industrial Revolution was to depend. It also acknowledged here what had but recently been accepted by some upon the Continent – that art and commerce may conduct a proper and beneficial relationship.

Shipley was a drawing master. The minutes of the Society's first meeting state that "Ye art of Drawing is absolutely Necessary in many Employments, Trades and Manufactures" and there follows the resolve to bestow premiums (the Society's original

method of giving encouragement) upon "boys and girls under the age of 16 who shall produce the best pieces of drawing". In that decision were the seeds of a conflict which was to disturb the Society's activities in the field of design until our own time, the conflict between the fine and the applied arts. As in the case of other institutions such as the Royal College of Art, its history is very largely concerned with the development of that conflict. In the first 90 years of its career the Society's contribution to the development of design was negligible, although its work in stimulating the advance of industrial technology was so very great. Its failure was the period's failure to consider seriously what was not fine or polite art. Among its few projects in these years was a very early competition for "the most ingenious and best fancied designs, composed of flowers, fruit, foliage and birds, proper for weavers, embroiderers and calico printers". In 1801 another prize was offered for 'chintz patterns'. On the other hand in the realm of the fine arts, the Society recorded outstanding successes, not only in fostering the work of young painters and sculptors, but most importantly by holding in 1760 the first public exhibition to be held in England of work by living artists.

## Before the Crystal Palace

It was in the 1840's and during the presidency of the Prince Consort that the R S A first began to justify and fulfil the intentions of its original programme, but its activities which led directly to the Great Exhibition must not be regarded as an adventure undertaken in solitude. In 1835 a Parliamentary Commission had enquired "into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design among

the people (especially the manufacturing population) of the country". Two years later the Normal School of Design (afterwards to be called the Royal College of Art) had opened at Somerset House and by 1851 more than a dozen schools of design had been founded. By the time, however, that a second Commission of 1846 had reported pessimistically upon the achievements of the previous ten years, the Society had started the process which was to lead to the Crystal Palace.

In 1844 the secretary of the Society, Francis Whishaw, arranged the first of two evening exhibitions which encouraged his committee to attempt an annual display of 'Works of Industry' modelled upon those already being held in France and Germany. Although the scheme was promptly and enthusiastically supported by Prince Albert, it did not appeal to manufacturers and the Society decided that it should first attempt to educate public opinion by offering a number of special prizes for industrial design, the entries to be used in the formation of small exhibitions. Among the first prizewinners was Henry Cole whose association with the R S A had already begun. His tea set entered under the pseudonym of 'Felix Summerley' won a silver medal. In 1847 the entries for the first and second competitions were shown in what is now the lecture room at the Society's home in John Adam Street and the number of objects was brought up to 214 by the addition of examples acquired from manufacturers, including Wedgwood, Copeland, Minton, John Murray and James Powell. This show attracted 20,000 visitors and under Cole's guidance further schemes were projected, including the circulation of exhibits among the government schools of design. The success of this first exhibition was so great that in the next year the number of exhibits rose from 214 to 700 and by 1849 it had been found necessary to restrict the exhibits to certain categories.



1



2

**1:** Small palette in silver or silver gilt first given in 1766 to youthful candidates in fine arts, instead of medals or money.

**2:** The Society's large medal or Minerva medal designed by John Flaxman in 1805 and engraved by G. F. Pidgeon. This was made in gold or silver.

**3:** Stamp on a saucer stating that the design had received the Society of Arts gold medal in 1820.

**4:** The base of a cup from the Felix Summerley tea service which won a silver medal from the Society in 1846.

**5:** The Albert Medal of 1863 in gold designed and engraved by Leonard Wyon.

The steps which led from these pioneering and most important exhibitions, the first of their kind in England, to the great affair of 1851 have been described too recently to need repetition here.

## **Fine art versus applied art**

During the 35 years which followed, the Society's activities in the field of design were various and useful, but not spectacular. It was intimately connected with the much less successful International Exhibition of 1862, which was managed by a commission appointed by the Society. It also played its part in the four exhibitions of "selected works of fine and industrial art" organised by the 1851 Commissioners in 1871-4 under the inspiration of Sir Henry Cole. In 1881 it sponsored its own display at the Albert Hall of 'Art Furniture' for which prizes were awarded and the Journal, which had first appeared in 1852, published a number of papers on design which had been read in its lecture room. Among the most interesting of these was a course of six lectures given in 1864 by the architect William Burges, interesting not only because they show an obvious indebtedness to Owen Jones's famous lectures of the previous year on 'The True and the False in the Decorative Arts', but because they reflect the dilemma which had frustrated the Society's efforts in the eighteenth century and which was not to be dispelled for another 60 years - the conflict between fine and applied art. Burges declared that the contemporary situation was influenced by a want of distinctive architecture which is fatal to art generally, the want of a good costume which is fatal to colour generally, the want of sufficient teaching of the figure which is fatal to art in detail. And his solutions were much the same as Jones's had been. Increase the number of government schools of design. Multiply the museums. Educate the designer more thoroughly.

Above all teach him to draw from the figure. (Style and costume, he believed, must be left to providence.) In spite of such historically interesting statements, however, and its work in encouraging exhibitions, the Society's policy seems to have lacked the coherence and drive which it had had in the 1840's.

This was to be revived to some degree in the 80's and 90's under the inspiration of the secretary at that time, H. B. Wheatley. The period begins in 1887 with the establishment of a Section of Applied Art in response, no doubt, to events outside its own walls. 1883 had seen the foundation of Mackmurdo's Century Guild, 1884 the establishment of the Art Worker's Guild and in 1888 was to come the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. And the first year's programme of the Applied Art Section suggests how the Society's work in the next 20 years was to reflect this movement which depended upon the fervour of William Morris and which in demanding and achieving a new recognition of the applied arts was the essential preliminary to the developments of this century. The subjects of the first year's papers were 'Wrought Ironwork', 'The Application of Gems to the Art of the Goldsmith', 'Ornamental Glass' and finally, from Walter Crane, 'The Importance of the Applied Arts and their relation to Common Life'. This pattern of interest and taste was to persist, indeed, until the section was disbanded in 1908. At the first meeting it is interesting to find the president, Sir George Birdwood, linking the progress of design with free trade and invoking with passion the name of Richard Cobden. The other name which the audience was encouraged to take away with them was that of Morris himself. At the end of the inaugural paper on 'The Condition of the Applied Arts in England and the Education of the Art Worker', the speaker, T. Armstrong of the Department of Science and Art, reminded them that what they saw beginning on that



*Design: Number 63*

evening depended most upon the foundation 15 years before of the firm of Morris, Marshall and Faulkner.

But like other organisations at that time the Society did not go further and make sure that the implications of Morris's teaching were fully recognised. Instead, the influence of Morris was experienced first on the Continent.

## Student Bursaries

In 1918 the purposes of the old Applied Art Section were revived and extended by the creation of an Industrial Art Committee. This included among its members representatives from the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, the Design and Industries Association and the LCC's consultative committees on silversmithing and allied trades. As in the 1840's the RSA was engaging with a movement already in progress. The Design and Industries Association had been formed in 1915, and at the time of the Society's renewed activity the decisions were being taken which led to the formation of the British Institute of Industrial Art in 1920. The Society immediately associated itself with these developments, but it was not able to achieve any substantial results. In 1920 it arranged a conference on furnishing in connection with the 'Ideal Home Exhibition' at Olympia and later helped the Office of Works to commission designs for dining-room furniture, which were provided by the Design and Industries Association and subsequently adopted.

It was in 1924 that the RSA embarked upon what has since become one of its most important contributions - its annual competition for students of industrial design. In that year £1,000 was offered in prizes and travelling scholarships and the propaganda value of the enterprise was increased by the exhibition of selected entries. In 1934 the scheme had to be suspended, but in those ten years £11,550 had been awarded and the number of competitors had totalled 10,269. Only four years later the competitions were revived on different lines. Instead of awarding a large number of miscellaneous prizes, the Society concentrated upon encouraging a few exceptional students through scholarships and travelling studentships. A permanent Bursaries Board was set up and in 1938 one scholarship and one travelling studentship, not exceeding £100 in value, were offered for furnishing textiles, for dress textiles and for pottery. The competitions had to be suspended once more between

1941 and 1946, but in that year the Industrial Art Bursaries were reintroduced and by 1948 the number of annual awards had been increased to 11. In 1952 there were 233 candidates and 17 bursaries were awarded. It was the late Sir Frank Warner who had, in 1924, first suggested this splendid project and his enterprise is commemorated in a medal given for the best individual textile design.

With the collaboration of the Royal Academy in 1935 the Society presented the Exhibition of British Art in Industry at Burlington House. By reason of its size and the emphasis placed upon the importance of good display, for which Maxwell Fry, Sir Ambrose Heal, H. S. Goodhart Rendel, Charles Holden, Edward Maufe and Grey Wornum among others were responsible, it was an event of outstanding significance, the forerunner of 'Britain Can Make It' and of the Society's own 'Design at Work' show of 1948. The latter concentrated upon the work of Royal Designers for Industry, and the creation of that faculty was among the results of the 1935 exhibition. The aim of the exhibition was "To impress upon the British as well as the foreign public both the importance of beauty in the articles they purchase, and the fact that British Manufacturers in co-operation with British artists are capable of supplying such articles in all branches of industry". In the speech made by the Duke of Windsor (then the Prince of Wales) at the opening there were echoes of the enthusiasm which Prince Albert had expressed 90 years before. The show was criticised, of course, criticised for its omissions, for being conservative, for evading some of the problems of the industrial design situation. Certainly it was not as adventurous in its choice of exhibits as were other and smaller exhibitions in the 30's, but its significance is not much diminished by this criticism. Its situation in Burlington House and the fact that it was sponsored by a Royal Society and a Royal Academy, both of them rooted in the eighteenth century, brought the matter of design before a larger public than could have been reached elsewhere. And the value of that exhibition does suggest the quality of the Society's achievement over 200 years. Although it has seldom been the source of revolutionary ideas it has provided a meeting-place for pioneers, particularly those concerned with the relation between art and industry.

The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance given, in the preparation of this article, by the secretary of the Royal Society of Arts, Mr K. W. Luckhurst, who kindly allowed him to consult, before its publication, the new history of the Society by Mr Derek Hudson and himself, which is to be published by John Murray.

# PATRONAGE for STUDENTS

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS is celebrating its bicentenary and an account of the Society's activities since it was founded in the eighteenth century is given in another article in this issue. The encouragement of young designers has always formed an important part of the Society's work and the present series of annual bursary competitions has continued, apart from the war years, since 1938.

The competitions are open to either full- or part-time students, between the ages of 17 and 30, at art schools, colleges or technical schools, while in some sections employees from industry are also eligible. The bursaries themselves are subscribed by industry and supplemented by the Society and are normally

## Some RSA Bursary Competition Winners

used by the winners for travel in this country and abroad where visits to design studios, factories, exhibitions and museums are arranged. Candidates must seriously intend to take up industrial design as a career, and it is interesting to note in a report recently compiled by the Society that of the 38 bursary winners since 1946, 25 are employed as industrial designers, two are teaching in art schools, five were still at school at the time the report was made, and only three have taken up employment unconnected with industrial design. Of the remaining three two are now training to be designers.

The scale of the bursaries has increased steadily in recent years. In 1946 four winners received a total of

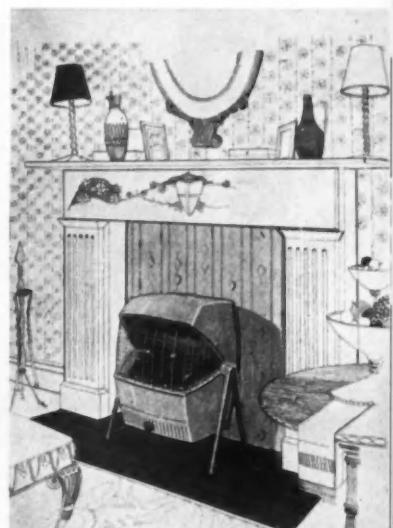
**DOMESTIC SOLID-FUEL APPLIANCES.** Design for a free standing, solid-fuel-burning fire, entered for part one of the set test, by Frank Watkins, School of Wood, Metals and Plastics, Royal College of Art.

Candidates were required to design the appliance so that it would be suitable for use in a wide variety of decorative schemes. The skilfully executed illustration shows that the fire is equally satisfactory in both

modern and near-Regency room settings. The wire guard pivots on the axis from which the fire is slung, and slides up to give access to the interior. Mr Watkins is a bursary winner.



Design: Number 63



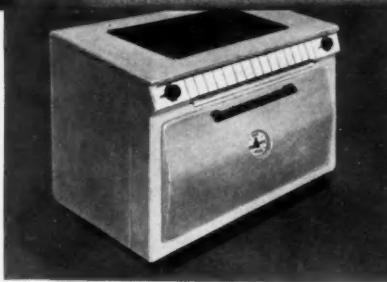
£500: the comparable figures for 1952 being 17 winners who received £2,225. This growth in scale is reflected in the number of competitors, of whom there were 12 in 1946 and 233 in 1952, while the sections have been extended to include domestic gas and electrical appliances, and more recently designs for sheet and laminated plastics.

The judges base their selection partly on the results of set tests and partly on examples of candidates' work which has been carried out during the normal course of their studies. Consideration is also given to the suitability of designs for practical manufacture and the standard of their presentation.

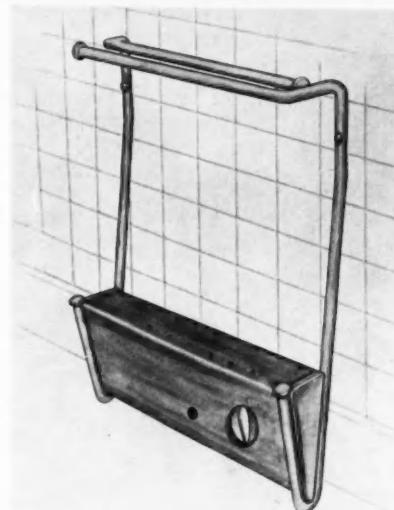
The 13 sections of the 1953 competition consisted of domestic electrical appliances, electric light fittings, domestic gas appliances, domestic solid-fuel-burning appliances, carpets, dress textiles, men's wear fabrics, furnishing textiles, PVC plastics sheeting, PERSPEX, footwear, furniture and wallpaper. Bursaries of £150 were awarded for each of these sections apart from the footwear section in which no award was made owing to the low standard of designs submitted. Three bursaries of £150 each were awarded in the dress textiles section, and additional awards have been made in the domestic electrical appliances, the electric light fittings, the domestic gas appliances and the domestic solid-fuel-burning appliances sections.

The Sir Frank Warner Memorial Medal, which is awarded to the candidate submitting the best design in the set tests of the furnishing textiles, dress textiles, men's wear fabrics or carpet sections of the competitions, provided it is of a sufficiently high standard, was won by a student of the Blackburn School of Art for a Jacquard furnishing fabric. This medal commemorates the late Sir Frank Warner who was chairman of the committee responsible for the industrial design competitions from 1924 until his death in 1930.

An exhibition of designs by bursary winners will be held at the Society's headquarters in John Adam Street from May 19-June 4 and will later tour some of the provincial centres. A selection of these designs, including those submitted for both the set tests and examples of work, is illustrated here.



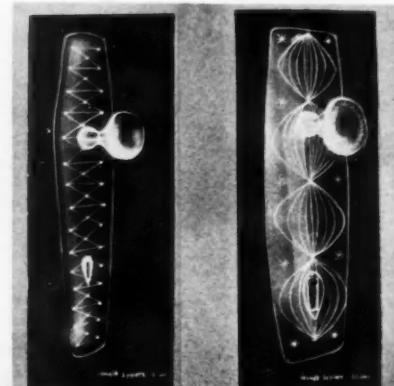
LEFT: DOMESTIC ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES. Design for a breakfast cooker, suitable for a one-roomed flat, entered for part one of the set test by P. Hammond, College of Art and Crafts, Birmingham. The control panel, which is tilted upwards to give better vision and access to the switches, is a convenient arrangement which could be more generally adopted. Mr Hammond is a bursary winner.



LEFT: DOMESTIC GAS APPLIANCES. Design for a towel dryer, an example of work submitted by Colin R. Cheetham, LCC Central School of Arts and Crafts. An internal shield prevents the top of the case becoming hot enough to scorch the towels. It is doubtful, however, if the outlet holes for the heated air are large enough in their present form. Mr Cheetham received bursaries in both the 1952 and 1953 competitions.



LEFT: DOMESTIC GAS APPLIANCES. Design for a convector radiant heater, entered for the first part of the set test by John L. Fagg, Kingston School of Art. The simple clean form of the case contrasts well with the pattern of the wire guard, though the symmetry of the design might be improved by centring the control tap. Mr Fagg was awarded a supplementary bursary.



LEFT: PERSPEX. Two of the three designs for door furniture, entered for part three of the set test, by Kenneth Ryan, Kingston School of Art. The pattern is engraved on the reverse side of the panel and may be filled with colour if desired. Although in these examples the key holes appear to be rather arbitrarily placed and the door knobs are not well related to the patterns on the finger plates, these designs point to possibilities in decorative treatments that are well worth further exploration. Mr Ryan is a bursary winner.

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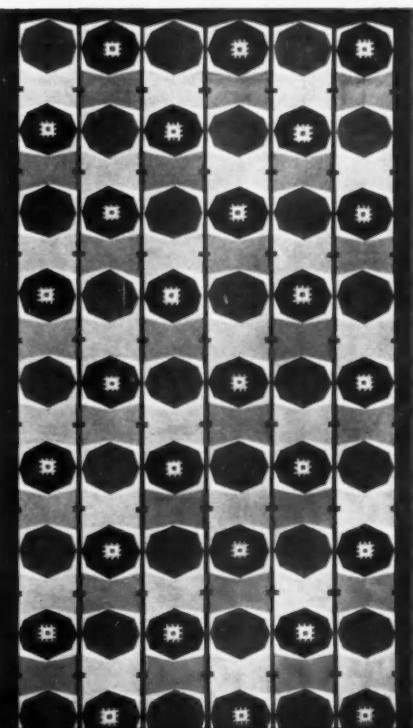
LEFT: FURNISHING TEXTILES. Design for a Jacquard weave entered for the first part of the set test by P. M. Nuttall, Blackburn School of Art. The design is for curtains in a Regency room and has black, green and brown warps with dark grey and white wefts. The flowing pattern of leaves grouped into loosely overlapping stripes is contemporary in feeling yet would harmonise well with its surroundings. Miss Nuttall was awarded the Sir Frank Warner Memorial Medal for this design.

RIGHT: WALLPAPERS. A design entered for part one of the set test by Margaret M. Stewart, Glasgow School of Art. Candidates were asked to design a wallpaper that would harmonise with the period atmosphere of an eighteenth-century country house. Careful observation of the plant forms is revealed in the drawing which has a vitality seldom to be found in commercial wallpaper design. Miss Stewart is a bursary winner.

RIGHT: PVC PLASTICS SHEETING. Design suitable for bathroom curtains, an example of work submitted by Margaret Capell, LCC Hammersmith School of Art. Commercial designs for this material are often conventional and dull. This design shows a more imaginative approach though the standard of drawing could be improved. Miss Capell is a bursary winner.

RIGHT: CARPETS. Design entered for the set test for an Axminster carpet square by Teresa Bamfield, Royal Technical College School of Art, Salford. The carpet, which was designed for the boardroom of an important engineering firm, is 28 ft long and 16 ft wide. The pattern is bold and lively and its scale is well related to the size of the room. Miss Bamfield is a bursary winner.

LEFT: FURNISHING TEXTILES. Three examples of work submitted by Constance Mary Holt, Leeds College of Art. Top and centre, two examples of uncut moquettes, and below a rayon and cotton tapestry weave. An alternative colourway of the lower design is shown. There is still room to explore more thoroughly the possibilities of the Jacquard loom, particularly in the field of moquettes, and it is encouraging, therefore, to see these accomplished designs. Miss Holt was awarded a bursary of £25 in 1949 and is again a winner in the 1953 competition.



# SHELL MOULDING

A new tool for  
the designer

F. C. Ashford\*

*Few who visited the last Engineering, Marine and Welding Exhibition could fail to have been impressed by the recent progress in foundry work; progress which may well herald a renaissance of the humble casting. One of the newest aspects of this work is the technique of shell moulding which forms the subject of the following article.*

FOR MANY YEARS any association with casting has been, so far as the designer is concerned, a sort of 'un-American' activity. Writers on industrial design have portrayed the casting, first as the maid-of-all-work led astray and besmirched by the Victorian ironmaster, and then as the skeleton in the cupboard. In this latter role, it was not to be mentioned in the same breath as pressings, pressure die castings or plastic mouldings. As a production technique it had no place among the brave new materials and methods

\* Scott-Ashford Associates Ltd.



*Part of an outboard-motor bracket cast by Light Alloys Ltd. The excellent surface qualities are particularly important in a form of this nature, where drag through the water must be reduced. Little fettling and finishing are necessary compared with normal methods.*

of the late 'thirties and onwards. It was something to be covered up at all cost.

There was, of course, a great deal to justify this attitude; castings for the most part were clumsy, heavy and, in particular, could not with economy and ease be given a sufficiently high standard of finish. But recent developments, particularly in the field of shell moulding, render these objections invalid and promise to make casting as attractive a proposition as any alternative technique.

Several precision casting processes produce superb

finish and fidelity to detail, but shell moulding might well hold greatest interest for the designer as being both suitable and economic for most purposes. It may well fill the present production gap between sand casting and the various toolled-for processes, and this makes it of especial interest for parts required for limited-production runs.

Much of British production is still in batches of 40 or 50 for a scientific instrument or piece of technical equipment, or 300 for a piece of office machinery - and there are many products of a less specialised nature produced in larger batches, but still not upon a sufficiently continuous scale to justify full-scale tooling-up.

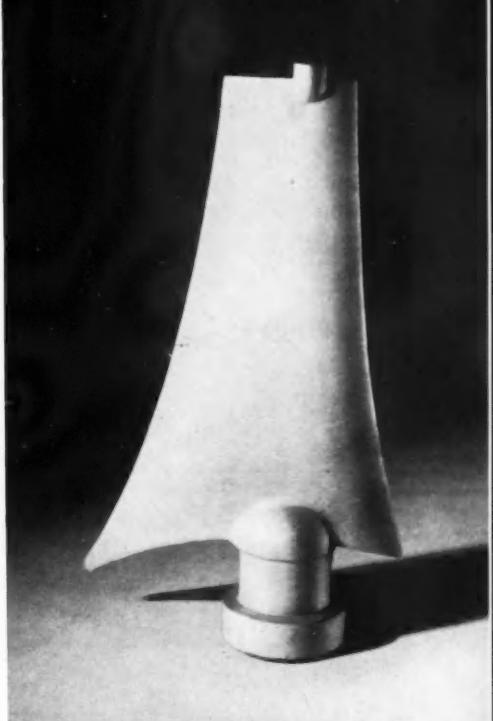
Even in the case of a product that does not have to compete directly with full-scale tooling-up, the techniques of quantity production have produced standards of finish and treatment of detail which are unconsciously accepted, and demanded, as a general standard. This means that by simple bending and forming operations, coupled with the skilful use of fabrication and sand casting and yet avoiding any undue proportion of localised hand-work the designer must try to achieve the same high standard of appearance which arises naturally from machine production. Only those who are continually faced with this problem really appreciate just how difficult it can be, and how welcome is any new process which promises to ease the situation.

## Moulding methods

Shell moulding was developed in Germany during the last war and has since been further developed in the United States, where it has been very fully mechanised and applied to large-scale mass-production. It has been used to a somewhat lesser extent in this country, the sole licensee for Great Britain and some parts of the Commonwealth being Polygram Ltd. As the name suggests, the process consists of producing a shell mould, achieved by investing a heated metal pattern with a mixture of fine sand and thermosetting resin. The result is a rigid shell of from  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch thick, having on its casting face the same high finish as that of the pattern itself. This surface quality arises from the metamorphosis of the resin which, on being 'cured', glazes-off the surface between pattern and mould. A contributory factor is that finer than usual sand may be used. The surface quality is due largely to the resin binder which takes over much of the function of locking the sand particles and providing mechanical strength to the mould.

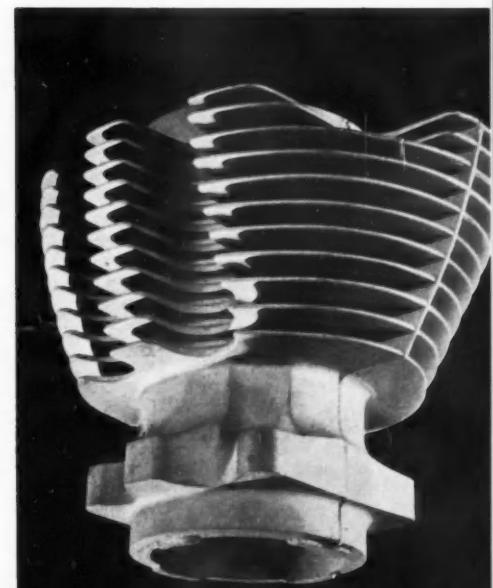
There should be no confusion with processes which merely treat the surfaces of a mould with resin *after* the pattern has been withdrawn. With shell moulding, the fine detail and the crisp edges are registered and set *before* the shell is stripped from the pattern. This is important to remember, since the process allows many of the characteristics of pressure die casting without the commitment of expensive dies.

The two halves of the mould, or 'biscuits' as they are termed, are stuck together with a resin glue, or simply held by wire clips, while the metal is poured. With larger castings, backing with lead shot or by mechanical supports is desirable to meet the gravitational stresses set up in the mould. British moulders, however, do not seem to place so much importance upon backing as do the Americans. Except for some steels with a very high melting point, there seems to be no limitation to the metal which can be



ABOVE: Aluminium alloy blade for an axial type fan. The makers Sturtevant Engineering Co believe that they are the first in this country to use shell moulding to achieve improved aerodynamics due to the high standard of surface finish and the ability to achieve very thin trailing edges. With sand casting this normally involves many hours of costly finishing and hand profiling to specific contours.

BETWEEN: Air-cooled cylinder head cast by Birco Cylinder Co Ltd. The fins illustrate admirably the ability to cast thin walls to considerable depth; by no means an easy operation with sand casting.





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**1:** A part from a BRADMA addressing machine produced by Adrema Ltd, cast in aluminium. Most of the markings visible are due to contact with other castings in handling and transit. The cost of finishing this part to take a high gloss enamel was exactly one-sixth of that for finishing and sand casting. Internally the part required virtually no machining apart from drilling holes for attachment, and the same applied to a complementary casting forming the base of the unit.

**2:** Internal view of the part for a BRADMA addressing machine.

**3:** The completed addressing machine showing the high quality finish obtainable with the minimum extra handwork.

cast by the process; brass, aluminium, gunmetal and iron all cast very well.

### Production cost saving

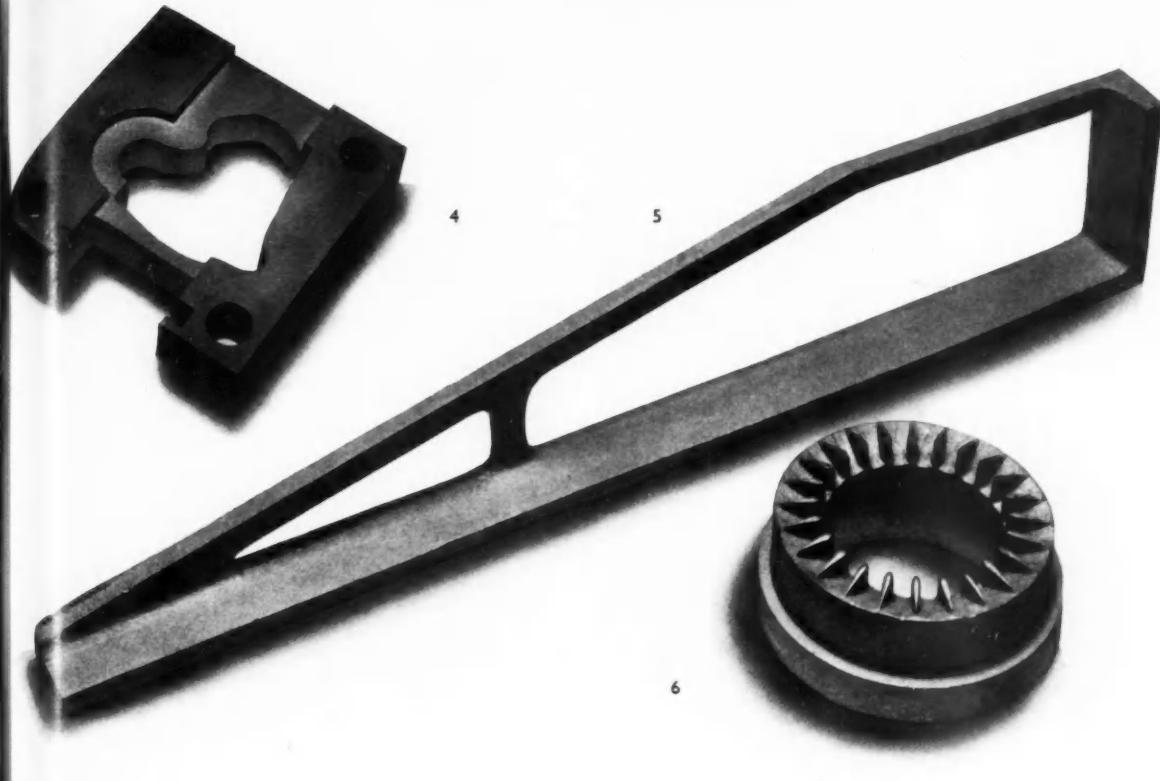
The main attractions are undoubtedly the high surface finish obtainable – all the examples illustrated represent savings of hours and hours on fettling and finishing – and the retention of crisp edges and fine detail. There is also the comparative ease with which the patterns can be made and modified. While these patterns may cost more than a normal wooden pattern, the high finish alone, apart from the greater dimensional accuracy obtainable, may well show a considerable overall saving. The part for an addressing machine illustrated above is an example.

In contemplating the use of shell moulding, many factors must be taken into account before a part cost can be obtained. The part cost should not be compared with that of a sand-cast part, as received from the foundry, but with the cost of a sand-cast part taken to a comparable degree of surface and dimensional finish. Consultation with the founders will

usually indicate whether or not the process will be economic in each particular case.

With short runs, the part cost would almost certainly be higher than for sand casting, although there may well be savings on machining and finishing which would go a long way to offset this. With long runs the cost will also be greater than that for die casting, either pressure or gravity. It must be remembered that the resin biscuit is expendable while steel dies are not, or at least at nothing like the same rate. In addition, the production of female dies and moulds for pressure die casting often involves very difficult and expensive milling and jig-boring operations, plus a great deal of very skilled handwork. The equivalent male pattern required for shell moulding could probably be produced by perfectly straightforward turning and milling operations, and incidentally more easily and cheaply modified, if necessary, later. Also with shell moulding less metal has to be removed from the castings, and consequently less metal is bought. Not only are men and machines freed for other work, but less capital is locked up in swarf and scrap.

As some very rough guide to the possibilities and limitations of the process, castings up to  $20 \times 20 \times 3$



inches or 6 inches, if the part is stepped, are quite practicable, while wall thicknesses can be produced as narrow as  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch, with a minimum of  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch, dependent upon the design of the part. Dimensional accuracy in one half of the mould is something like  $\pm 0.005$  inch, with  $\pm 0.010$  inch between points in either half of the mould.

The same conditions for draft obtain as for other casting processes, although it has been stated in certain American literature on the process that in some circumstances, dependent on the design, no draft, or even a small amount of negative draft or undercut, can be tolerated. Operators in this country do not seem to think that anything but the straightforward stripping of the fully cured mould from the pattern is a practicable proposition. They will, however, accept no draw for heights up to one inch, after which they like to be able to allow  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch, where this is permissible.

It is to be hoped that this new process will be fully investigated by designers and production engineers, since development is always accelerated and expanded where it receives the intelligent support and encouragement of all those whom it concerns. Pointing as it does to a solution of a problem so close to all product designers in this country, they, in particular, should be well to the fore in its development. It is also to be hoped that they will exercise some better control over its aesthetic development than did their Victorian forebears when faced with sand casting, if we are to be spared similar exercises in virtuosity.

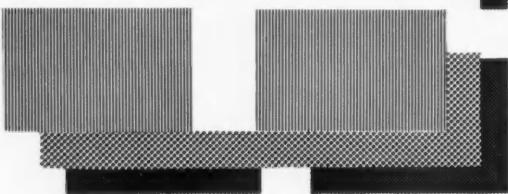
**4:** A part for a safe lock, cast in gunmetal. The great saving with this part, in addition to the almost total reduction of general machining, was the formation of the irregular-shaped opening, which would normally have called for contour milling or considerable handwork.

**5:** A structural component shown approximately actual size for an instrument chassis cast in aluminium. Flatness and squareness of the surface was of utmost importance. The slender top member would be difficult to achieve with sand casting.

**6:** A part for a pressure fire-hose nozzle, cast in gunmetal. The formation of the small vanes, which would otherwise have called for an intricate milling job, was achieved with virtually no machining at all.

ALL THE SHELL MOULDINGS illustrated here, apart from the cylinder head and the outboard-motor bracket, were cast by the Foundry Division of W. E. Sykes Ltd. All the photographs are of castings as sent from the foundry, with no extra work beyond removing runners and shot-blasting. They have not been re-touched and in most cases the lighting has been arranged to reveal what surface texture there was.

## FOREIGN REVIEW



This recurring feature provides a critical assessment of current designs from overseas.

### SWEDEN

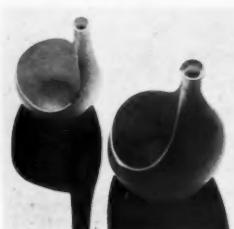
DESIGN correspondent: EVA RALF

#### Propaganda week for pottery

DURING SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR the Swedish potteries in co-operation with the Svenska Slöjdforeningen staged an intensive campaign for the promotion of contemporary Swedish pottery. The campaign, which lasted a week, was widely publicised in the press and with posters, and included the organisation of special window displays in retail stores. Its object was to create an interest in good Swedish pottery in contrast to the large quantities of imported poor quality goods which flood the Swedish market.

A promotion campaign on such a large scale has never been held in Sweden before and the generous response from manufacturers, the press and the public was encouraging. Much interest was also shown by the libraries, art galleries and museums where exhibitions and lectures were arranged. Although the astonishing lack of co-operation among retailers was a big disappointment it was generally felt that the week was successful and suggested many ideas for similar activities in other fields. The illustrations show a selection of new designs which were introduced just before the beginning of the week and are now generally on sale in the Swedish market.

Vase in white stoneware designed by Stig Lindberg and made by Gustavsberg Fabriker. The narrow neck and cut-away side is a new variation on a traditional Swedish shape.



ABOVE: Tea set designed by Karin Björquist and made by Gustavsbergs Fabriker. The shapes are enriched by the tiny embossed surface pattern and by the use of a contrasting material, cane, for the teapot handle — refinements seldom to be found in British mass-produced tableware.



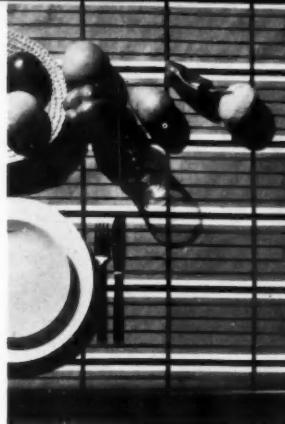
ABOVE: Pieces from a dinner service designed by Stig Lindberg and made by Gustavsbergs Fabriker. The bold and imaginative forms gain in effect by the use of plain-colour finishes.



ABOVE: Coffee set designed by Arthur Percy and made by A B Karlskrona Porslinsfabrik. The slight reed moulding gives a delicate texture and quality to the surface.

## Brighter tablecloths

Gay and refreshing when seen in combination with fine china and cutlery are these modern designs for plastic-coated cotton tablecloths. They are produced by the firm of Stigen A B and were introduced at a recent exhibition arranged by Nordiska Kompaniet, a leading retail store in Stockholm. For a number of years Stigen A B has been producing this type of material printed with rather dull and conventional patterns, but the new range, designed by Astrid Sampe and Göta Trägårdh, is a complete departure. There are nine basic patterns with a number of different colourways, giving a total of over 70 variations.

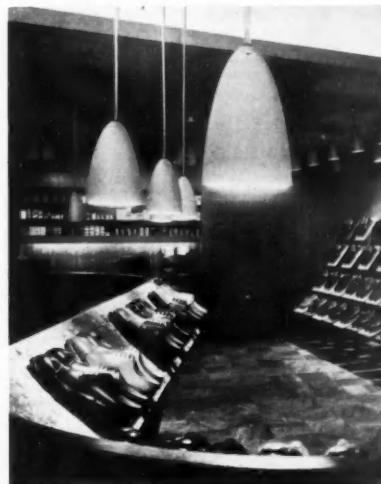


Two examples illustrated are 'The Grille' designed by Astrid Sampe, left, and 'The Rose' designed by Göta Trägårdh, right.

## New ideas in clothing display

The clothing store of Mea, Stockholm, has been undergoing a process of conversion since 1938. Two of the latest departments to be completed, for men's shoes and clothing, show an unusual approach to the often conflicting problems of storage and display. The interiors of the men's clothing section have been designed by Arne Rudberger assisted by Kerstin Rosenberg. The shoe department was designed by Sune Lindström.

*Below: In the men's ready-to-wear department the disadvantage of hanging suits from a continuous rail, so that only one shoulder and a sleeve are visible, has been overcome by this simple and effective method which gives a better view of the styles available. There are altogether 100 white, moulded plastic dummies beneath the cast concrete vaults. The specially designed demonstration tables have one end covered with metal to prevent scratches being made by the metal hangers.*



LEFT and ABOVE: Men's shoe department. The quality of polished leather is shown to advantage on these curved sloping counters, with a rough tiled surface. The display stands are lit from above.



ABOVE: Detail of the white, moulded plastic dummy. The wall behind is panelled in dark oak.

LEFT: The dummies are attached to sliding rails from which the complete size range is hung. Over 1,700 suits can be stored in the showroom.

# NEWS

## Four types of furniture

In a recent television programme on the British Furniture Exhibition I pointed out that four distinct types of furniture seem to be emerging.

In the first place there are reproductions of antique pieces, such as have been popular, especially in the higher price market, for many years. These are no longer made by hand, as the originals were. Medieval, sixteenth- or seventeenth-century examples which owe so much of their sturdy individuality to the joiner's tools seem to me far more difficult to present in terms of the machine than eighteenth-century pieces which show a precision in workmanship and economy in material more in harmony with the engineer's outlook. The general quality of such pieces is usually good. Whilst this is obviously a lazy way of designing, the results seldom lack taste, although to one brought up among originals there is a curious lack of scale in, say, a large sideboard reduced to fit into a modern small room whilst the chairs remain as originally designed.

Secondly, there is well-designed modern furniture. This still has to be searched for, but there is more of it in the exhibition than in previous years. Unfortunately several firms making promising experiments were not at Earl's Court. This furniture is in the tradition of the antiques in that it is attempting to solve today's problems of adequate storage in small space and so on using the methods and materials available, just as the earlier furniture attempted to solve very different problems by different methods with the use of different materials. The method is so obviously reasonable and common-sensical that it is bound to spread, and it is therefore all the more remarkable that it should be so stoutly resisted, especially by the larger firms.

The other two categories to which so many pin their faith are what I might call imitations of these two groups. The imitations of antiques show faint traces of the originals in a welter of deviations, nearly all for the worse. Many of them are soundly made and have adequate storage space. In cocktail cabinets, most of which I suspect are sold to dazzle and impress the neighbours rather than for use, an unbelievable degree of vulgarity is sometimes achieved.

It is clear that many firms who produce such things and who feel they ought 'to have a bash at this contemporary stuff' are using the same designers for both groups, with the results one might safely predict. At this present stage it is necessary to repeat *ad nauseam* that the risk of doing a job well is usually less than doing it badly. *Good design is not possible without good designers.*

GORDON RUSSELL

## Dow Prize competition

A cash prize of £75 is offered by the Illuminating Engineering Society in the 1954 Dow Prize competition for the layout, lighting, decoration and furnishing of a dining-room and cocktail bar in a city hotel. The object of the competition is to encourage greater collaboration between lighting

engineering students and those of architecture, interior design and other related subjects in schemes where lighting plays an important part. The failure of the illuminating engineer and the architect to get together at an early stage during the design or conversion of buildings was the chief complaint at a recent open meeting held by the Society. Although architects and engineers often blame each other for the bad lighting schemes in many public buildings it is clear that an understanding of each other's problems and an effective co-operation is necessary before the many difficulties can be resolved. The competition is therefore primarily intended for students working in groups, though entries from individuals will also be included. It will be judged by a jury appointed by the Illuminating Engineering Society in co-operation with the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

The closing date for the submission of entries is November 15, 1954, and full details can be obtained from the Society's secretary, 32 Victoria Street, London SW1.

## Congress for designers

A congress of the Alliance Graphique Internationale, the international association of leading designers, was held recently at Basle, Switzerland, with members attending from Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland and Switzerland. The British members included Tom Eckersley, Milner Gray, Ashley E. Havinden (British correspondent of the Association), F. H. K. Henrion (vice-president), Pat Keely and Hans Schlegel.

The purpose of the Congress and the association in general is to improve design standards and to safeguard the professional interests of designers.

## Canadian designs of merit

This month, exhibitions of designs selected by the Canadian National Industrial Design Council for the 1954 Design Merit Awards are being held at the Council's Design Centre in Ottawa and in departmental stores in Toronto (DESIGN August 1953 pages 15-17). The judges made their final selection for the awards during February and the Design Centre exhibition will open with a presentation ceremony for the winning designers and manufacturers. All products which receive the 1954 Design Merit Awards will be exhibited again at the Canadian International Trade Fair later this year.

## Classical 'Ideal Home'

The 45th DAILY MAIL 'Ideal Home Exhibition', which opens on March 2 until March 27, has been designed by Sir Hugh Casson in association with Robin and Christopher Ironside. Arcadia, the idyllic garden of classical mythology, forms the basis of the theme which depicts the sun god, Apollo-Phoebus, driving his chariot, drawn by sixteen winged horses, into the sky and dismissing Diana, goddess of the moon. Each of the winged horses, which are 13 ft high and 18 ft long, was modelled by Angelo de Cauchferta and a team of sculptors working with Richard Dendy. They are made of expanded aluminium mesh covered with cloth impregnated with a plastic glue.

## Gauge and tool exhibition

The Gauge and Tool Makers' Association is holding its fourth exhibition at the New Horticultural Hall, Westminster, from May 17-28.



**Commemoration goblet**

This goblet is one of a small number which are being produced by James Powell & Sons (Whitefriars) Ltd to commemorate the visit of HM Queen Elizabeth II to Geelong, Victoria, during the Royal tour of Australia. The goblet is hand-made in lead crystal and is hand-engraved with the diamond point by W. J. Wilson.

## CoID touring exhibition

The touring version of the 'Round the Table' exhibition, which was organised by the CoID, is now on show at Hammonds of Hull until March 13. Later it will be shown at Schofields of Leeds (March 19-April 3), Curls of Norwich (April 10-24), Affleck & Brown of Manchester (May 1-15) and at the Scottish Design Congress, Edinburgh, organised by the CoID Scottish Committee (May 24-26).

## Pattern book for architects

The Wall Paper Manufacturers Ltd is issuing a new wallpaper pattern book called THE ARCHITECTS' BOOK OF ONE HUNDRED WALLPAPERS, selected mostly from the 1954-5 range of CROWN machine printed patterns. To launch the new range an exhibition entitled, 'Wallpaper for Interior Design and Display' is being held at the headquarters of the British Colour Council, 13 Portman Square, WI, from March 16-26. The exhibition will be open from 10 am until 4.30 pm on weekdays excluding Saturday. The new pattern books are available free to architects from the manufacturers.

## New magazines

THE HOME BEAUTIFUL is the title of a new quarterly magazine to be published by the National Magazine Co Ltd. The first issue will appear on March 18.

OFFICE MAGAZINE made its first appearance in January. It makes its appeal to those people in offices who wish to learn of new methods and modern equipment. OFFICE MAGAZINE is published monthly, price 1s by Current Affairs Ltd.

# LETTERS

## Parking meters

SIR: THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL of January 14 reproduces a photograph of a 'parking meter'. The journal reports that these are to be adopted in London, and other towns will no doubt follow suit.

If this report is true, it means that these coin-in-the-slot machines will supersede the arm-banded attendants, and our London squares will be adorned with platoons of 'parking meters'. Whether these gadgets will make parking in London more or less harassing to motorists is debatable, but according to the report one thing is certain and it is that arrangements are being made for their production.

The appearance of this particular piece of 'street furniture' is not, as one would expect, the result of an architectural or design competition, but an imported standard American pattern reminiscent of the 'style' of the early 'thirties.

The Society of Industrial Artists (the only professional body of practising designers for industry), deprecates the suggestion that nothing more suitable to our needs can be contrived in this country as a joint effort of engineers and designers.

ASHLEY HAVINDEN  
President  
Society of Industrial Artists  
OLIVER HILL  
Chairman  
Engineering Products Group, SIA  
7 Woburn Square WC1

## BOOKS

**Architects' Working Details**, edited by D. A. C. A. Boyne, The Architectural Press, 21s

This is a selection of 74 working details that have appeared in the series still running in THE ARCHITECTS' JOURNAL. About a quarter of the selection consists of pre-war examples, which show how vital was the work of our pioneers of the Modern Movement in the 'thirties.

Each example consists of a photograph and short description on one page and, facing it, large-scale detailed drawings showing the construction. The subjects lie on the border-line between construction and interior design, with a very few examples of movable furniture - the sections being headed: windows, doors, staircases, walls and partitions, roofs and ceilings, furniture and fittings, balconies, covered ways and canopies, heating. It is a book to be highly recommended to anyone, of whatever profession, who is called upon to design any of the items mentioned above. It is not, of course, intended that the designs should be copied. There is nothing standardised or generalised about them: they are all tailor-made solutions to particular problems. Their usefulness consists in the help they give in getting ideas under way at the



### Display units for exhibition stands

Exhibition stand fitting is a costly item and to enable firms to take part in trade fairs and exhibitions without the expense of an elaborate stand, the City Display Organisation Ltd has produced some useful screens and display units which can be hired or purchased at a comparatively low cost. There are ten different units which can be assembled in various combinations making use of the walls of the shell scheme normally provided by the exhibition organisers. Three of the units are free-standing screens which can be used to divide up the stand area. Exhibitors may choose one of the five colour schemes provided or their own combinations of colour within the range of all the schemes if they wish.

In a system of this kind the units must of necessity be simple in style, as characteristic detailing would make them easily identifiable and increase the possibility of all stands using the fittings looking alike. The small amount of detailing or 'character' in these units is not particularly attractive; for example, the thin, unstable-looking splay leg on the front of the counter, and the imitation insubstantial Venetian blind. These units will obviously be of great value to the smaller firms who would like to try their luck in such exhibitions as the British Industries Fair without risking too great an outlay on the experiment. They will also be useful to exhibitors at the smaller provincial exhibitions, and they could do much to improve the standard of small stand design generally, provided intelligent use is made of them. One of the dangers of using them is that exhibitors, while taking the expert advice of the firm providing the units to acquire a well-designed stand at low cost, may spoil it by inexpert display within the framework provided. For this reason the manufacturers could usefully offer as part of the service the assistance of a fully qualified display man.

P.I.F.

ABOVE: In this arrangement the display itself has not been particularly well handled. The hire cost of the units shown, exclusive of chairs, lighting and floor covering, is £146 11s 6d for the run of the exhibition.

BELLOW: A simple arrangement for a corner site. The number of free standing and wall shelves can be altered to suit exhibitors' requirements.



very beginning when the designer is first confronted with a problem.

The editor, in a very interesting introduction, claims that these details give architects precedents in the solution of problems similar to those available in the medical or legal professions. There is something in this claim, but analogies between different professions can be worked too hard. This book describes how a previous designer, and a good one, tackled a similar problem. But it does not provide the sort of precedents that are urgently needed, such as standard components elegantly designed to eliminate, or drastically reduce, the need for this special purpose, tailor-made structural detailing.

MARK HARTLAND THOMAS

#### The Adventure of British Furniture 1851-1951, David Joel, Ernest Benn, 3 gns

The title sounds the note for the contents. 'Popular' rather than 'scholarly', the text contains some sweeping, not to say doubtful, assertions; it is enlivened by the author's reminiscences of the trade, which at least serve to bring out the difficulties under which the furniture manufacturer has sometimes worked.

The book is divided into sections (The Victorian Background, William Morris, etc) accompanied by appropriate photographs, and ends with a number of appendices. Although the title includes the dates 1851-1951, the nineteenth century suffers badly in comparison with the twentieth. Very little pre-1900 furniture is shown, and that the most familiar. No mention is made of Pugin, Burges, Godwin, and Baillie-Scott, among others. To improve the balance of the book the sections on the 1920's and 1930's might have been amalgamated and condensed, while furniture at the Festival of Britain hardly needs a section to itself.

The appendices take up almost a quarter of the book, and appear to be included as a

make-weight: a curious collection they are, with the possible exception of the biographical notes which are largely irrelevant: what there is of value would be better included in the main text.

The author seems over-optimistic about the present position in furniture design: there is little evidence as yet that the emphasis on novelty is slackening. As Mr Betjeman implies on page 247 in some characteristic and penetrating remarks, the essentials of good furniture remain the same. Looking at the magnificent Gimson bureau on page 185 or the Ambrose Heal dresser on page 47 (both designed about fifty years ago) and then at the horrifying 'contemporary' room on page 6, we may well ask ourselves 'What is modern?'

Highlights of the book are, first, the many interesting photographs, particularly of Gimson and Heal furniture and some good pieces of the 1920's and 1930's; secondly, the layout and printing (although there are some misprints). A bibliography would be useful.

IAN COLQUHOUN

#### Correction

DESIGN February 1954 page 12: The designer of the fabric in item 5 was Stephen Richardson, and not John Murray.

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Photographs on page 28 and foot of page 29 by George Miles.

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